What is significant about owner-occupied homes is that those initiating the retrofitting and those to live in the house before, during and after the retrofitting are the same people. In most cases, these people do not have specific technical knowledge or an interest in retrofitting. Many policy approaches to encourage retrofitting tend to either ignore this or to treat it as a question of an information deficit to be solved.

In the past, retrofitting the building stock was oversimplified into only technical and economic concerns. This omitted an active participation by the owners/inhabitants in the process as well as the lack of understanding of what retrofit options were suitable. Unsurprisingly, the results from this process have been problematic – low levels of engagement and poor outcomes, which failed to match the expectations at both policy level and individual homeowners. The papers in this special issue question these assumptions. Instead, an alternative approach is provided. The questions are reframed to consider:

- how retrofitting can be understood in relation to the many other practices which people perform in their everyday life in their homes
- what qualities people want their home to have
- what competing desires the retrofitting has to be negotiated against.

A key finding is that the consideration of people as active participants before, during and after the retrofit process must underpin policy and practice in order to incorporate their inhabitants’ practices, behaviours, motivations and aspirations. A better understanding
of real life context and specific demographics is a critical component for policy and practice.

**List of articles**

- Retrofitting owner-occupied housing: remember the people, Kirsten Gram-Hanssen
- Why German homeowners are reluctant to retrofit, Ray Galvin
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- [Why German homeowners are reluctant to retrofit](http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rbri20/42/4)
- [Better home energy audit modelling: incorporating inhabitant behaviours](http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rbri20/42/4)
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